



Harnett
COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

Economic Development Commission

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Honorable Dan Elliot
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Chairman Elliot:

We are writing to express Harnett County's support for a strong freight railroad network, not only in our state, but across the nation. Because of their tremendous impact on the state and the increasing growth opportunities for the industry, I believe any attempts to re-regulate railroads will have an extremely negative impact on our county, our state and our industries.

Freight railroads are a vital industry for Harnett County and North Carolina. The State is served by two Class 1 rail lines, CSX and Norfolk Southern, as well as many other short line railroads. These railroads operate over more than 3,500 miles of track, employ more than 2,600 people and account for millions of dollars in annual payroll. The industries that freight railroads serve in North Carolina depend on them for the safe and efficient transportation of goods to their customers.

North America's freight railroads have announced plans to invest more than \$12 billion in 2011 to enhance and maintain their infrastructure. As you know, each \$1 billion spent on rail infrastructure supports 20,000 jobs. Under the current, reasonable regulatory environment, U.S. freight railroads are creating jobs and improving their infrastructure in North Carolina and throughout the nation.

Freight rail is the most capital intensive industry in the nation, and it is imperative that continued reinvestment be encouraged. With so many other states under pressure to expand the economy and create jobs, any action by the Surface Transportation Board to adopt policies that would discourage private investment would be counterproductive.

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns, and hope the Board will work to ensure a healthy freight rail network that continues to provide a true public benefit to our nation.

Sincerely,

Phyllis M. Owens, CEcD
Director